

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 2 and 4-7 are amended and claim 8 is added. No new matter is added.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies shown to Applicants' representative by Examiner Heinrich in the November 18, 2008 personal interview. Applicants' separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

Claims 1-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Hammeke, U.S. Patent No. 4,724,299, in view of Whitney et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,043,548, and Mihashi, JP-B2-2891378. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 calls for a powder metal holding space that is within a body portion and is divided into plural powder metal holding regions corresponding to plural supply passages. As agreed during the personal interview, the Office Action fails to explicitly recite which of the applied references disclose this feature. Further, Applicants respectfully assert that none of the applied references disclose this feature.

Hammeke discloses both a chamber 38 and a gap 94; however, neither of these features can reasonably be interpreted as disclosing the powder metal holding space of claim 1 because neither one has any structure that divides chamber 38 or gap 94 into plural powder metal holding regions corresponding to plural supply passages, as called for in claim 1.

Whitney teaches an annular passageway 126. Like Hammeke discussed above, Whitney fails to disclose a powder metal holding space that is within the body portion and is divided into plural powder metal holding regions corresponding to plural supply passages because annular passageway 126 has no structure that can reasonably be interpreted as dividing the annular passageway into plural regions.

Mihashi appears to disclose a ring shaped powder metal holding space 41 and plural supply passages 43; however, nothing in Mihashi can reasonably be interpreted as teaching or suggesting that the powder metal holding space 41 is divided into plural powder metal holding regions.

Dependent claims 2-7 were not given patentable weight. In order to advance prosecution, claims 2 and 4-6 have been amended as agreed during the personal interview to more explicitly call for product features.

Regarding claim 3, Applicants respectfully assert that "attachable to/detachable from" is clearly a feature which describes a relationship between the dividing portion and the inner side body portion.

Regarding claim 7, during the personal interview, the Examiner requested that Applicants further clarify "an arc of the powder metal holding space." Applicants respectfully assert that because, in claim 1, the powder metal holding space is "ring-shaped," an arc is an inherent feature of a ring shape. Consequently, claim 7 is further defining the relationship of the supply passage and the powder metal holding space.

Also, claim 7 has been amended to have correct antecedent basis as discussed in the personal interview.

It is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Hammeke in view of Cusimano et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,672,171, Whitney and Mihashi. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed above, Hammeke, Whitney and Mihashi fail to disclose all of the features of claim 1. Cusimano suffers similar deficiencies.

Cusimano teaches an annular groove 52 which the Office Action is apparently asserting to be a ring-shaped powder metal holding space. Applicants respectfully assert that

nothing in Cusimano can reasonably be interpreted as dividing annular groove 52 into plural powder metal holding regions corresponding to plural supply passages because annular groove 52 is a continuous circular groove.

Claims 2-7 depend from, and are patentable with independent claim 1, as well as for the additional features they recite. It is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the application are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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